



Science Europe Call to the European Institutions

The Need for an Ambitious Budget for Horizon 2020

Brussels, 27 September 2019

Ahead of the trilogue negotiations on the EU Budget for 2020, Science Europe urges the European institutions to agree on a substantial budgetary increase for Horizon 2020.

Science Europe calls on the Council to reverse the cuts it proposed in July and September¹ to the European Commission's proposal for the last budgetary period of Horizon 2020. The proposed reduction of €413m, one of the largest proposed, includes a €118.5m cut for frontier research as funded by the European Research Council (ERC), despite the ERC's worldwide renowned scientific and innovation achievements. The ERC attracts world-class scientists at all career stages, fosters scientific breakthroughs and major advances in all scientific areas, and produces a substantial number of patents and innovations.

Outcomes of Horizon 2020 provide a key contribution to long-term economic growth, the competitiveness of European businesses, and in finding solutions to societal and global challenges. To achieve these priorities, Europe must maintain its capacity to produce and exploit knowledge. Currently, the budget of Horizon 2020 only funds 1 in 5 of the high-quality proposals received. The success rate is even lower than 1 in 10 in some instruments.² Horizon 2020's underfunding has been widely acknowledged by the European Commission and consequently this is why its draft budget for the financial year 2020 proposes an increase of 7% when compared to 2019.

The Council's proposed reduction is also most surprising considering that the Finnish Presidency of the Council recently reasserted the need for "investments in knowledge, uptake of research results and deployment of innovations recognising R&I as a key enabler and driver for productivity, policies and solutions for sustainable growth."³ Science Europe regrets that the Council does not pledge to provide the EU with the appropriate means to achieve its ambitions and shares the European Parliament's assessment that "Cuts to key operational lines of the three Horizon pillars are hard to justify."⁴

"The Council, Parliament and Commission must agree on a significantly increased budget for Horizon 2020 during the upcoming trilogues," explains Lidia Borrell-Damian, Secretary General of Science Europe. "The EU budget, and the Horizon 2020 budget in particular, must enable the EU to increase its capacity to push the boundaries of knowledge, achieve the sustainable Development Goals, and strengthen Europe's global competitiveness."

¹ Council position on the draft general budget of the European Union for the financial year 2020, ST 10919 2019, and ADD 1 and ADD2 and Draft general budget of the European Union for the financial year 2020: Council position of 3 September 2019 ST 11734 2019 INIT

² Interim Evaluation of Horizon 2020, 2017, p85

³ Presidency report in view of the Competitiveness Council on 26-27 September 2019 'Developing our economic base: vision for a long-term strategy on sustainable growth', 11965/19

⁴ Working Document on Council's position on Draft Budget 2020 (Section III), Committee on Budgets